United Nations A/C.3/58/SR.34

General Assembly
Fifty-eighth session

Official Records

Distr.: General
10 November 2004
English
Original: French

Third Committee

Summary record of the 34th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 6 November 2003, at 10 a.m.

Chairman : Mr. Maertens (Vice-Chairperson) ..... (Belgium)

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In the absence of Mr. Belinga-Eboutou (Cameroon), Mr. Maertens (Belgium), Vice-Chairperson, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

1. **The Chairman** read out a letter to the Bureau from the Chairman of the Group of African States requesting that, in view of the fact that Africa was not represented among the elected members of the Bureau at the present moment, no decision be taken on certain sensitive issues before the Committee, particularly in connection with rule 129 of the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly. The Group of African States was aware of the Committee's workload and had no objection to the adoption of draft resolutions by consensus and in their entirety, without prejudice to the provisions of rule 129. Having regard to its position on that rule, the Group of African States requested the Bureau to adjourn all decisions on draft resolutions parts of which had been put to the vote pending the return of the Chairman of the Committee, at present away on mission, and pending the settlement of the question of rule 129.

2. He said that the Bureau shared the concern of the Group of African States and would endeavour to take account of its request in full respect of the provisions of the Rules of Procedure. Calling from cooperation and understanding on the part of all, he informed the Committee that the sponsors of the draft resolutions appearing on the agenda for the meeting, with the exception of the sponsor of draft resolution A/C.3/58/L.18, reiterated their desire to see them adopted at the present meeting. In that connection, he recalled that the Rules of Procedure did not allow any interruption of voting once the procedure had begun.

Agenda item 110: Advancement of women
(continued)(A/C.3/58/L.17/Rev.1 and Corr.1)

Draft resolution A/C.3/58/L.17/Rev.1 and Corr.1: Women and political participation

3. **The Chairman** said that the draft resolution had no financial implications.

4. **Mr. Foy** (United States of America), after stressing the importance of the draft resolution, introduced two sets of oral amendments, the first of which consisted essentially of drafting changes. In the first preambular paragraph, a comma should be inserted after the words "United Nations". The beginning of the eleventh preambular paragraph should read as follows: "Recognizing also that women's full and equal participation in the political process", and the beginning of the twelfth preambular paragraph should read: "Recognizing further that women's participation in decision-making". In the penultimate line of the thirteenth preambular paragraph, the word "the" preceding the words "relevant resolutions" should be deleted. The first line of subparagraph (d) of operative paragraph 1 should read as follows: "To counter, as appropriate, negative societal attitudes about women's capacity". Lastly, the word "with" in the second line of subparagraph (i) of operative paragraph 2 should be deleted.

5. The other, more substantive amendments were as follows: subparagraph (j) of operative paragraph 2 should now read: "To continue to study links between poverty eradication and women's empowerment, in particular as regards political participation, and compile and widely disseminate good practices and lessons learned". The first line of subparagraph (l) of the same paragraph was amended to read: "To develop programmes for the education and training of women and girls in ...". Lastly, in subparagraph (b) of operative paragraph 4, the words "and to the private sector, political parties" should be inserted between the words "Governments" and "and other relevant bodies".

6. He announced that the following countries had joined the co- sponsors of the draft resolution: Bahamas, Bolivia, Botswana, Cote d'Ivoire, Croatia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Haiti, Israel, Italy, Luxembourg, Mali, Mauritius, Nicaragua, Palau, Paraguay, Philippines, Republic of Moldova, Samoa, San Marino, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia and Uzbekistan.

7. He hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted by consensus.

8. **The Chairman** said that the following countries had also become sponsors of the draft resolution: Albania, Angola, Barbados, Belize, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Congo, Ghana, Guinea- Bissau, Honduras, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mozambique, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Suriname, Swaziland and Zambia.

9. *Draft resolution A/C.3/58/L.17/Rev.1, as orally amended, was adopted without a vote.*

10. **Ms. Thairkheli** (Pakistan), emphasizing the important role played by her country's women in the political struggle for freedom and their contribution to Pakistan's social development efforts, said that women in Pakistan had always enjoyed equal rights in terms of political participation. Article 24 of the Constitution made it incumbent upon the Government to take appropriate steps in that respect. It should be recalled that as far as back as 1964 a woman had narrowly failed to be elected to the highest office of the State; today, more than 40 000 women were serving on local councils, 120 were members of provincial assemblies and 17 were members of the Senate. The fact that in most cases they had had no previous experience illustrated the power of action women enjoyed in her country. Her delegation welcomed the adoption by consensus of the draft resolution, explaining that it had supported the draft without becoming a co-sponsor because some of its concerns could not be reflected in the draft.

11. **The Chairman** reminded the Committee that it had been invited to present its comments in connection with a triennial examination of the implementation of recommendations formulated by the Committee on Programme and Coordination at its fortieth session on the basis of in-depth evaluation of programmes relating to the advancement of women (paragraphs 564 and 565 of the Committee's report (A/58/16)). No comments had been received by the Chair.

12. The recommendations of the Committee on Programme and Coordination appearing in paragraph 4, section C of that Committee's report were adopted.

13. The Chairman said that the decision of the Third Committee would be forwarded to the President of the General Assembly in accordance with the decisions concerning the allocation of agenda items taken by the General Assembly at the second plenary meeting of the fifty-eighth session.

Agenda item 106: Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family *(continued)* (A/C.3/58/L.11)

Draft resolution A/C.3/58/L.11: Policies and programmes involving youth

14. **The Chairman** said that the draft resolution had no financial implications.

15. The following countries had become sponsors of the draft resolution: Argentina, Belgium, Benin, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Chile, Congo, Costa Rica, Croatia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Finland, Guatemala, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Mali, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Republic of Moldova, Sierra Leone, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United Republic of Tanzania and Venezuela.

16. **Ms. Carvalho** (Portugal) read out a number of amendments to the text of the draft resolution. The words "and its two Optional Protocols" should be inserted after the words "Convention on the Rights of the Child" at the end of the first preambular paragraph. The words "and transmit them to the Secretariat, as appropriate, by September 2004 at the latest" should be added at the end of operative paragraph 11. The beginning of operative paragraph 13 should read as follows: "Recommends that two plenary meetings at its sixtieth session in 2005 be devoted to...". In the second line of operative paragraph 14, the words "and youth representatives" should be inserted after the words "youth organizations". In operative paragraph 20, the words "to invite the Director-General of the International Labour Organisation, in the context of the Youth Employment Network, to submit" should be deleted and replaced by the words "to include in his report to the sixtieth session".

17. The following countries had joined the co-sponsors of the draft resolution: Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Barbados, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Czech Republic, Cyprus, Ecuador, El Salvador, Ethiopia, France, Gambia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Iceland, Indonesia, Jamaica, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Malaysia, Malta, Monaco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Peru, Rwanda, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, San Marino, Slovakia, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia and Zimbabwe.

18. Her delegation hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted by consensus.

19. **The Chairman** announced that the following countries had also become sponsors of the draft resolution: Albania, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belize,

Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Bulgaria, Canada, Central African Republic, Cote d'Ivoire, Eritrea, Grenada, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Kazakhstan, Lesotho, Latvia, Malawi, Mongolia, Morocco, Nicaragua, Niger, Swaziland, Thailand, Uruguay and Zambia.

20. *Draft resolution A/C.3/58/L.11, as amended, was adopted without a vote.*

Agenda item 113: Promotion and protection of the rights of the child *(continued)* (A/C.3/58/L.24)

Draft resolution A/C.3/58/L.24: Situation of and assistance to Palestinian children

21. **The Chairman** said that the draft resolution had no financial implications and reminded the Committee that Algeria, Bangladesh, Cuba, Djibouti, Indonesia, Jordan, Kuwait, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malaysia, Morocco, Namibia, Nigeria, Oman, Senegal, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Sudan, United Arab Emirates and Yemen had become sponsors of the draft resolution.

22. **Ms. Khalil** (Egypt) informed the Committee that a new paragraph, reading as follows: "Emphasizing the importance of the safety and well-being of all children in the whole of the Middle East Region", had been inserted after the fifth preambular paragraph. The addition was the fruit of prolonged negotiations between the co-sponsors, who had wished to accentuate that aspect of the problem inasmuch as it related to children. She hoped that the amended text would meet the concerns of all delegations.

23. The following countries had also become co-sponsors: Belize, Brunei Darussalam, China, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Pakistan and Tunisia.

24. **The Chairman** announced that Afghanistan, Barbados, Benin, Burkina Faso, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Malawi, Niger, Togo and Zimbabwe had also become sponsors of the draft resolution.

25. **Mr. Shapiro** (United States of America), speaking in explanation of vote before the vote, said that he wished to focus attention on the human aspect of the problem. The repercussions of the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians upon the children of the region left no one indifferent, but his delegation was concerned not only by the situation of Palestinian children but also by that of Israeli children, murdered or mutilated indiscriminately by perpetrators of bomb attacks or other terrorists in the mistaken belief that acts committed in the name of national liberation or national resistance were justified and could not be qualified as terrorist acts. The United States was just as concerned over the situation of children killed, wounded, mutilated and traumatised everywhere else in the world, in particular Central Africa and Afghanistan. It was difficult to see how a resolution could be devoted to a particular group of children, as though children in other regions did not also deserve a special resolution. For that reason, and as a matter of principle, his delegation called upon the sponsors of the draft resolution not to politicize the sufferings of one group of children in a particular region in which a conflict was taking place. It would vote against the draft if it were put to the vote and invited other delegations to do likewise.

26. **The Chairman** announced that a recorded vote had been requested on the draft resolution, as orally amended.

27. **Ms. Khalil** (Egypt) enquired who had requested a recorded vote.

28. **The Chairman** replied that the request had been made by the United States delegation.

29. **Mr. Drobnjak** (Croatia), speaking in explanation of vote before the vote, said that his country attached the greatest importance to the question of protection of children regardless of their nationality or ethnic origin. His delegation would far prefer to see a resolution adopted that set out to provide protection and assistance to both Palestinian and Israeli children. In the absence of such a resolution, it had decided to abstain from voting in Committee in the hope that, by the time a vote came to be taken in plenary, delegations would have agreed on a joint text. The moral and political importance of such a solution was so great that no effort should be spared to achieve it. However, if all efforts failed, Croatia reserved the right to change its position and to vote in favour of all resolutions relating to the protection of Palestinian and Israeli children that would be presented in plenary session.

30. **Mr. Mekel** (Israel) said that, for the second consecutive year, Palestine was submitting to the Third Committee a tendentious resolution entitled "Situation of and assistance to Palestinian children". The draft constituted a falsification of reality. It served the political ends of a party to the conflict and was yet another in the long list of resolutions and initiatives

defended by the Palestinian party before the United Nations to the detriment of other matters of concern to the international community.

31. The draft was contrary to the spirit of universality reflected in the two resolutions the Third Committee adopted each year. The question could not be avoided at to the soundness of a resolution devoted to just one group of children when other children elsewhere in the world, especially in certain parts of Africa and the Arab world - and, indeed, in Israel - were suffering just as much.

32. The draft passed by in silence the unabashed use of children in the violence and terrorism campaigns conducted by the Palestinians; the fact that children were directly encouraged to participate in terrorist acts, including suicide bombings; and the rabid incitements to violence encouraged by the Palestinian educational system and official media and condemned by the vast majority of Member States.

33. Likewise, the draft said nothing of the destruction wrought among Israeli civilians by Palestinian terrorism, which had resulted in the death of some 900 persons, including 109 children, and the wounding of several hundred Israeli children, often deliberately targeted in selected places.

34. For all those reasons, Israel would vote against the draft resolution and exhorted other delegations to do the same.

35. Israel shared the concerns relating to the humanitarian situation in the occupied territories and welcomed the international community's efforts in that regard. The only way of guaranteeing the safety of both Israeli and Palestinian civilians was to put an end to terrorism. While honouring its obligation to protect its civilian population, Israel spared no effort to improve the humanitarian situation of the Palestinian people. Initiatives aimed at improving the situation of all children in the region should emphasize the need for education in peace and tolerance rather than serve the interests of one of the parties to the conflict.

36. His delegation was convinced that all children in the world, including Israeli and Palestinian children, were entitled to the same protection, and would prefer the Commission to pronounce itself only on resolutions that were based on a universal approach and could command a consensus. It regretted not having succeeded in convincing the other delegations of the counterproductive nature of the Palestinian draft, and hoped that they would express the same concern with the well-being of Israeli children when the Committee examined the draft resolution Israel would present if a resolution giving different treatment to Palestinian children was again considered and adopted by the Committee at the present session. If the Palestinian draft were withdrawn, even at the present stage of the proceedings, Israel would be prepared to withdraw its own draft.

37. He enjoined delegations to prevent a repetition of the situation that had arisen at the preceding session and to refrain from applying a double standard by saying that one group of children deserved special support more than another.

38. **Ms. Price** (Canada), speaking in explanation of vote before the vote, said that the situation of children everywhere in the world, especially children caught up in armed conflicts, was of concern to the international community as a whole. She called upon all parties to the Israel-Palestine conflict to put an immediate end to violence and to apply the Road Map so that all children and all young people in the Middle East might lead a normal life in safety, dignity and peace. Canada would again abstain from voting on the draft resolution, being convinced that, instead of establishing a hierarchy of different groups of children, there was need to promote and protect their rights on a world scale, as the Committee had endeavoured to do for many years past.

39. *A recorded vote was taken on draft resolution A/C.3/58/L.24, as revised.*

In favour:

Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, Gambia, Ghana, Grenada, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia,

Nepal, Niger, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Philippines, Qatar, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Swaziland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against:

Israel, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, United States of America.

Abstaining:

Albania, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Central African Republic, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Cote d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Guatemala, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Samoa, San Marino, Serbia and Montenegro, Sierra Leone, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Ukraine, United Kingdom, Uruguay.

40. *The draft resolution was adopted by 88 votes to 4, with 58 abstentions.*

41. **Mr. Cavallari** (Italy), speaking on behalf of the European Union, explained that the European Union had abstained from voting because, in the interests of the effectiveness of the General Assembly's work, it favoured a thematic approach rather than one focused on the situation in a particular country. For the same reason, it would adopt an identical position in connection with the draft resolution on Israeli children.

42. The European Union reiterated its deep concern over the degradation of the living conditions of Palestinian children, especially as regards their health and education, and enjoined Israel to do better in shouldering its responsibilities in the matter. The fact that the European Union was the main supporter of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East testified to its commitment to improving the humanitarian situation of the Palestinians and their children.

43. The European Union's support of the numerous resolutions considered by the General Assembly at its regular annual session and at the tenth emergency special session illustrated the position of its member States, who continued to believe that only a just and lasting peace based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973 and 1397 (2002) and on the Road Map proposed by the Quartet on 30 April 2003 and adopted by the parties to the conflict would bring about an effective improvement of the conditions of life of Palestinian children and their families. The European Union was determined to do everything in its power to contribute towards the attainment of that goal.

44. **Mr. Nikiforov** (Russian Federation) said that the humanitarian situation in the Middle East, and in particular that of children, was a matter of great concern to the international community. His delegation had voted in favour of the resolution and welcomed the amendments made to it, which gave it a more balanced character.

45. **Mr. Nürnberg** (Norway) said that his delegation's renewed abstention should on no account be interpreted as a sign of indifference to the situation of the world's children. Norway considered that a thematic approach to the problem was preferable to focusing on a particular country, which could create a regrettable precedent for the work of the Third Committee.

46. **Ms. Groux** (Switzerland) said that her country, which had abstained from voting, deplored the situation of all children affected by armed conflicts without any distinction whatsoever as to national or ethnic origin. It recognized the difficult situation of Palestinian children in the occupied territories. In referring to the Fourth Geneva Convention, the draft resolution should have mentioned the obligations incumbent upon all parties to the conflict. Switzerland commended the considerable efforts being made by the international community to meet the needs of Palestinian children and welcomed the holding of informal consultations in connection with the draft resolution.

47. **Ms. Rasheed** (Observer for Palestine), speaking within the framework of the general debate, thanked the delegations which had voted in favour of the draft

resolution, as well as its co-sponsors. Given the special and unique situation of Palestinian children, living as they were under a foreign occupation that had lasted for 46 years, the adoption of the resolution would make it possible to relieve some of their sufferings. Her delegation called upon the delegations that had abstained from voting to review their position when the draft came before the plenary, thus helping Palestinian children to lead a normal life freed from the yoke of foreign occupation.

48. **Ms. Khalil** (Egypt) reminded the Israeli delegation that the draft resolution had been drafted on the initiative of the Egyptian delegation. Palestine, as an observer, could not submit proposals to the Committee. She thanked the delegations that had voted in favour of the draft resolution and called upon all others to join the consensus on the occasion of the vote in plenary.

The meeting rose at 11.30 a.m.